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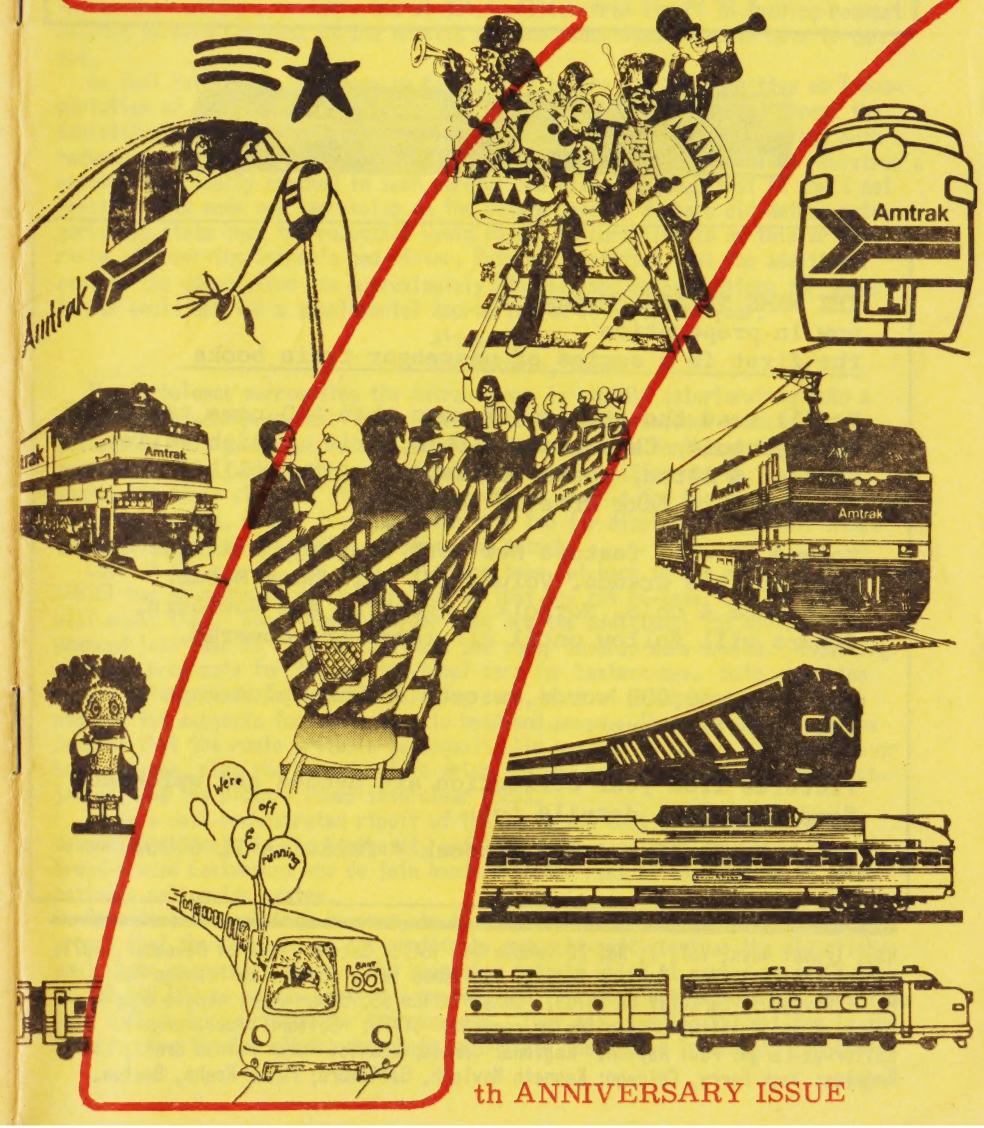

th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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WELCOME to RTN's Seventh Anniversary Issue! With this, our 164th issue, we complete seven years of publication. On Dec. 7, 1970 the first issue of RTN appeared. In this giant issue, along with our regular features, we present some recollections of the years we've been with you and of the things that have happened in that time.

LETTERS

In your editorial "The Present Crisis at Amtrak" (1st Aug issue) you ask why Amtrak last spring accepted a cut of $34.1 million from its FY 78 funding request without warning Congress of the drastic service reductions it would have to carry out.

As Paul Reistrup's testimony on Mar 7, 1977 before the Sub-Committee on Transportation of the Senate's Appropriations Committee shows, Amtrak did accept the Administration's recommended appropriation of $500 million but warned that such a reduced subsidy would require some adjustments in the level of service. Reistrup's warning is actually couched in such careful and bland language that it could not possibly have made any impression on the Senate panel. Nowhere did Amtrak categorically state that the reduction would result in curtailments on this or that route. Concerning Amtrak's bad winter, Reistrup testified that the additional cost to the corporation was approximately $15 million, an expenditure for which Amtrak would ask for a supplemental appropriation later in the year.

Alfred E. Ehm
San Antonio, Texas

The turbulence surrounding the Amtrak issue is rapidly deteriorating into a slug-fest between proponents who subscribe to the Congressional mandate of a nationwide rail passenger network and the advocates of a Northeast Corridor-only approach. This latter group, inequitable as their position may be, has been sharpening their cleavers of late, preparing to come in for the final kill on the long-haul trains, a goal that has never been too far displaced from their minds at any time during the entire existence of Amtrak.

Look at the score. The long-hauls have been cut back in the West and the SUNSET has been denied daily operation so that the 284 bi-level cars on order will equip them. Gone from the order book are the additional 153 bi-levels announced last year to fill out the West and equip several more trains. Remaining only are proposals for 353 new low-level cars for Eastern use. Note, too, the recent action taken to dump 170 existing cars, most of which need minimal work and are fit subjects for conversion to head-end power. Throw in the relentless demands that the route criteria be dogmatically applied to trains that have never had a chance, plus the harassment to which the new board nominees have been subjected, and the picture comes into clear focus.

It is a well-orchestrated ripoff of the South and West by unreasonable and demanding elements in the Northeast, and this should explicitly exclude the many broad-minded Easterners who do join hands with the rest of the country in advocating a nationwide system.

Opposition is growing, however, to the "Corridor-only" philosophy as word gets around that the Corridor is not profitable and self-sufficient as the old cliche would have everyone believe. The operating deficit which it racked up in FY 77 of $92,848,000 in no way implies a profit, and this does not include the more than $1.6 billion appropriated for improvements. They are spending $53 million in the Corridor for fencing alone, enough to gold-plate the "Texas Triangle". Another

way to look at it is that 2% of Amtrak's route-miles are responsible for 18% of the system's total deficit and there is little prospect for any improvement since the deficit is $10 million higher than last year. This has occurred even tho the Corridor has been completely equipped with new cars producing lower costs and higher patronage.

It can be expected that a growing coalition will be making itself heard, loudly protesting national support of a transportation welfare state for the Northeast, and their message will be that 41 states do not intend to finance the transportation needs of the other nine.

If Amtrak funds must be limited, then they should be distributed as equitably as possible over the entire nation and more localized needs such as the Northeast Corridor should be financed from state, regional and local sources.

Again we say, however, that if we all remain unified in our efforts and bring all possible pressures to bear on Amtrak's irresolute management, forcing them to clean up their act and place their house in order, it may be possible to have both as the necessary funds will appear at the ticket counter instead of the government trough.

M. D. Monaghan, Director
NARP - Region IX
Garland, Texas

Lately I look forward to my copy of Rail Travel News with dread. Not only has Amtrak completely ruined the former great trains, but now I discover that my dear friend, the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, is also scheduled for the chopping block. Why is this happening to us? Why have our beloved trains been forced to undergo this fate?

In fairness to all railfans reading my words, my godson and I flew to San Francisco; we were scheduled to return on a flight which was supposed to leave the San Francisco airport at 1:30pm. After much B.S., we did depart at 8:45 pm. So you see, dear railfans, we are not the only ones. Lest anyone think that planes are the best, please go thru what I went thru.

Please tell me it is not true that my beloved SOUTHERN CRESCENT is about to come to an end.

Frank G. Williams
Paramount, California

Santa Fe

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In the last issue is the pithy comment, in reference to the corridor-vs.-long haul argument: "wouldn't the Washington bureaucrats love to have rail supporters divided against themselves?" Well, we are divided against ourselves, and it's our own damned fault. The argument that we've been hearing from Texas, stripped to its basics, is as follows: Why are you guys messing with my train? My train's fine. Someone else's train is losing half a billion dollars a year. If we Texans can't make the deficit go away, at least we can blame it on someone else.

Perhaps it's because I live in the middle of the country, but I don't want any part of the New York vs. Dallas argument. I want both trains, and I'm writing to tell you that thanks in part to this argument, we may soon have neither type. You see, the people, thru their elected representatives, have called up to question the bill. What's this, they ask, why are your trains losing half a billion dollars? The answer comes back, all modes are subsidized; some just hide it better than the rail people do. So then the Congressman asks the next question: Oh, does the Greyhound bus have a crew of five changed twice between Chicago and Detroit? I'm as much for trains as the next RTN reader. But if I were out there in the snow tonight, driving a Greyhound bus at Kalamazoo or Jackson, where Conrail crews change but the driver of the barking dog keeps going, I'd be mad as hell.

Charles N. Landey
Detroit, Michigan

AMTRAK TO GET $18 MILLION MORE; MUST RESTORE ALL TRAIN CUTS

On Nov 30 the House of Representatives voted in effect to put a freeze on any reductions in Amtrak service until Congress, Amtrak and the DOT have had an opportunity to re-evaluate the national rail passenger system. In a rare House revolt, Congressman Al Gore Jr. of Nashville spearheaded a move that overruled the report of Congressman McFall's Appropriations Committee, which had given Amtrak only $8 million of its supplemental appropriation request, and voted that the rail corporation should receive $18 million. The vote on the extra money passed by a 258-138 margin and seemed to indicate that Congress was again coming to bat against diminishing rail service. The revised bill requires that Amtrak restore service cuts that took place recently, and retain all trains for the time being, including the FLORIDIAN that Amtrak was preparing to drop on Jan 19. Amtrak announced on Dec 1 that it had ordered the "subject to discontinuance" notices for the EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, LONE STAR, INTER-AMERICAN, and SAN JOAQUIN removed from the trains and stations where they had been posted. Amtrak also said the FLORIDIAN will continue to run on its present route, and that the corporation would begin work to re-route it via Atlanta. Amtrak is also required to reverse the frequency reductions made recently in the Northeast and to restore some runs that were dropped, including,

page 5

The Bay Area Electric Railroad Association
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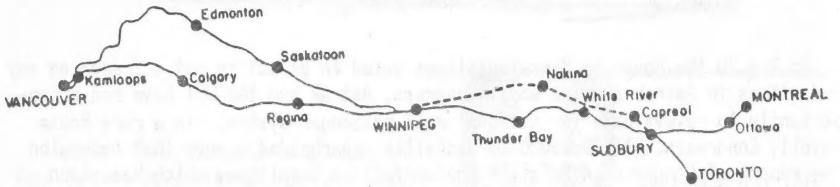
apparently, the CLAMDIGGER. The new bill specifically removes the language of the original McFall report that had stipulated that Amtrak could not come back to Congress for more funds this fiscal year. While as of this writing action on the bill is not complete, most observers expect that the bill will be allowed to stand.

On Nov 23 Amtrak had announced procedures for obtaining public comment on the five trains mentioned above that it had sought to restructure or discontinue. While the threatened discontinuances are now removed, Amtrak apparently still has the mechanisms for receiving public comment available. These include a toll-free telephone number: 800-424-5106, available Mon-Fri 10am-6pm Central Standard time from Nov 23 thru Jan 21, except for Nov 24, Dec 26 & Jan 2; and an address for receiving written comments: Harold L. Graham, Project Officer, Amtrak, 400 N. Capitol St., Washington DC 20001.

RAIL CANADA

MONTREAL TRANSIT SHUTDOWN began Nov 21 after striking maintenance workers threatened to sabotage the system. Bus and subway service was shut down, and merchants complained of huge business losses that will not be recovered.

CTC'S "FINAL PLAN" for transcontinental service on VIA Rail Canada has been issued, and is similar to the earlier "preferred plan" except that a 3-nights-out schedule between Vancouver and Montreal is given, rather than the 4-night-out plan suggested earlier. The map below shows the transcontinental routes, with the



broken line indicating a Sudbury-Winnipeg service consisting of a tri-weekly train on CN Capreol-Winnipeg connecting with the transcon run, and a bus connection between Sudbury and Capreol. The more southerly transcon train will run on CP with a schedule similar to the present CANADIAN, while the more northerly train runs on CN with a schedule about the same as the southerly one. During peak seasons there are to be two sections of the transcon train between Sudbury and Winnipeg. Tri-weekly local trains Capreol-Nakina and Sudbury-White River are also in the plan; previously this service was to have been dropped. The plan specifies equipment requirements: "The transcontinental and Capreol-Winnipeg trains are to have adequate baggage, coach, sleeper and meal/beverage lounge facilities. The local trains ... are to have basic coach accommodation."

VIA RAIL CANADA President Frank Roberts reportedly does not like the plan for two transcon trains west of Winnipeg. He said that in about 3 years there will be a revision of the plan, and believes that a single transcon run is more reasonable.

ABOUT 100 RDC'S will be rebuilt by VIA Rail Canada. They are to receive higher horsepower engines and refurbished interiors.

THE CN DERAILMENT of Oct 23 reportedhere last issue was not of an excursion train, as wire reports stated, but of a regular train, probably train 73, evidently carrying a large tour party.

COURT OF INQUIRY into the loss of the CN ferry "William Carson" last Jun 3 was told at St. John's, Newfoundland, that if ships were restricted in Labrador waters until they were ice-free, shipping would be next to impossible there. Ice chunks reportedly entered the engine room with sea water as the ferry sank.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

RAIL COMMUTER SERVICE run by Conrail between Chicago and Valparaiso, Indiana, will terminate on Jan 29, Conrail said on Nov 28. An earlier offer by the Northwestern Indiana Public Transportation Authority and the Indiana Public Service Commission to subsidize the commuter line until next Mar 31 was withdrawn by the agencies, Conrail said. Two daily roundtrips on the line now carry about 700.

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC has taken its bid to drop its rail commute line to the federal level. On Nov 17 the SP announced that it will take its case to the ICC, since the state Public Utilities Commission has not yet acted to decide whether the railroad can drop the San Francisco-San Jose rail commute line. SP said the law allows it to go to the federal ICC because the PUC did not act within 120 days. The request with the PUC was filed last May, and the PUC said it will not present its full case until next May 1. The San Francisco Chronicle immediately editorialized that "There is no justification ... in the face of the national energy crisis, for calling upon a metropolitan community like this to put up with the shutdown of an essential transit function like the SP's."

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS told Washington DC officials late in November that the entire 100-mile Metrorail system may never be completed. He has postponed a final decision on the line to Glenmont, and is weighing which one of five suburban lines, including Glenmont, might be eliminated for economic reasons. Montgomery County Executive James P. Gleason called upon citizens to become involved and direct complaints to Adams.

THE MARYLAND DOT will seek a $13.5 million federal grant to improve the B&O commuter service between Washington and Brunswick MD and between Baltimore and DC.

AC TRANSIT BUS drivers went on strike, shutting down the Bay Area system on Nov 21. Talks are planned to begin Dec 5. The first strike day happened to have the heaviest rainfall in the area in many months, adding to traffic problems. The system shutdown has apparently increased BART ridership.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL GULF was to open its new commuter line from Richton Park to Park Forest South in Chicago on Sunday, Nov 20, after a formal dedication Nov 18.

CHICAGO'S RTA RECOMMENDED this month the dropping of part of the rail commuter service in McHenry County and the addition of new bus lines.

A $13.1 MILLION contract has been awarded to the Budd Company to build 30 new bi-level commuter cars for Chicago's RTA. The RTA also has agreed to buy the C&NW's commuter cars for $20.8 million.

CARS & CONSISTS

*RF&P Officials' Washington Redskins Football Special, Alexandria VA, Nov 27: engines RF&P 142, B&O 5629 (cab rear, boiler equipped); RF&P office car 1.

*SR SOUTHERN CRESCENT, train 1, 1st section, Alexandria VA, Nov 27: engines 6914, 6909; cars 951, 827, 1043, 1036, 842, 836, 824, 3307, 2004 "Enoree River", 2011 "Rivanna River". Second section, same: engines 6906, 6904, 6916; cars 706 "South Carolina", 3786, 838, 664 "Ft. Oglethorpe", 846, 840, 3308, 2353 "Crescent Shores", 837, 830, 826, 2017 "Tiger River".

*PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL, train 794, Seattle Nov 13: engines 216, 219 (F40's); cars 21170, 21175, 20008 Amcafe, 21110, 21263, 20219 Amdinette, 21171, 21174, 20020 Amdinette, 21169, 21108, 21261--Skyline Travel Shoppers Special returning to Vancouver.

*FLORIDIAN, train 57, Chicago Nov 21: engine 582; cars 1523, 2530 "Bobolink",

8080, dome 9561, dome 9560, 4568, 3333, SP 6713 (baggage).

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, New Orleans Nov 23 (ar. 10:50am, 14+ hrs late): engines 536, 534; cars 1071, 9963, 9925, 9916, 3395, 8038, 2602 "Pacific Beauty", 2616 "Pacific Home", 2613 "Pacific Gardens", dome 9251 "Silver Penthouse". Same consist that left New Orleans Nov 21, turned back due to SP freight derail't west of Sanderson TX.

*Special Amtrak Army-Navy Game trains to Philadelphia, Washington DC Nov 26: Train W2: engine 966; cars 21157, 20038, 21230, 21107, 20051, 21027, 20017, 21233, 21164, 20003, 21101. Train W3: engine 968; cars 1374 Ambag, 21023, 21181, 20002, 21127, 21266, 21216, 20032, 21064, 21124, 20014, 21095, 21105, 416.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Nov 29: engines 531, 533; cars 1400, 4852, 4512, 4858, 4542, 8105, 4869, 4509, 4886, 4500, dome 9352, 8034, 2505 "Blue Mott", 2601 "Pacific Beach", 2261 "Placid Harbor", deadheads dome 9374, 2616 "Pac. Home".

BN BLAMED FOR SFZ DERAILMENT

RTN has learned that the National Transportation Safety Board concluded last month that the derailment of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR on Dec 16, 1976, near Papillion, Nebraska, was caused by deteriorated track on the Burlington Northern line. The wreck resulted in one passenger death, and three days after the derailment BN slapped an embargo and then a speed limit on Amtrak SDP40F engines, blaming them for the wreck. The speed limit was imposed by other railroads handling the Amtrak engines, with the result that Amtrak schedules fell apart and travelers were inconvenienced. Congress was hit with numerous complaints because of the system "breakdown", which continued into last summer. The BN track had been inspected just two days before the derailment. However, Safety Board officials said that the deteriorated condition of the ties went undetected in the inspection. The Associated Press said that the Board found that spikeholes in the ties at the derailment scene were being enlarged and the wood being overstressed for several months preceding the wreck. Only under the stress of a train passing would the rail movement happen and thus it would go undetected in an inspection, according to the Board. The Board recommended that the DOT (the FRA) find new detection methods to permit track inspectors to find weakened crossties. An Amtrak source has told RTN that the BN has refused to allow the DOT to run test cars over the track in question. The railroad has performed considerable track repair in the area since the derailment. The investigation into the GM-built SDP40F engines has not yet been completed, so further information about their effect upon questionable track is not yet available. The most recent victim of the SDP40F slowdown is the FLORIDIAN, which had its schedule lengthened this fall as a result of assigning the engines to pull it.

THE WINTER BEGINS EARLY

Heavy winter weather in the Rockies and Northern Plains states late this month affected rail travel. The NORTH COAST HIAWATHA westbound at Missoula was 11 hrs late Nov 21, 8 hrs late Nov 23, 15 hrs late Nov 25. The BN has declared that passenger trains under steam in weather of zero or lower must have a 10-car limit. This apparently resulted from train 17's steam system freezing up in North Dakota --the train due into Seattle Nov 25. That train got in on Nov 26 at 9:20am. The EMPIRE BUILDER leaving Seattle that morning was delayed 4 hrs because the NCH's engines had to be used on it--no spares. Big holiday crowds were in "anguish." The BUILDER going out of Seattle Nov 26 ran as an extra on the ex-NP track Pasco to Spokane because the usual SP&S track was closed by a rockslide. Westbd BUILDER #7 on Nov 26 was 4hrs, 20mins late leaving Pasco WA. The same train the next day was 2½hrs late there, but had been 3hrs late at Williston ND where it arrived in a

 (continued on page 23)

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP DATA

Route	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Metroliners	167,140	145,560	149,280	152,950
N. E. Corridor	418,610	444,260	453,570	425,470
NY - Philadelphia	278,940	237,510	273,460	274,820
Harrisburg - Philadelphia	67,520	67,410	69,620	68,720
Empire Service	61,280	63,840	67,300	51,790
Washington - Montreal	9,410	10,990	13,070	8,050
NY - Montreal	6,640	8,730	10,160	5,820
NY & DC-Chicago (BROADWAY)	23,440	28,000	29,200	18,040
NY & DC-Kansas City	18,660	20,630	22,660	13,810
NY & Boston-Chicago (LSL)	19,730	25,570	25,180	14,990
DC-Cincinnati-Chicago	12,210	15,210	16,520	8,550
DC-Tri-State	3,560	5,520	6,920	3,540
DC-Newport News	6,970	7,790	7,610	5,080
DC-Cincinnati	3,960	6,170	4,860	3,140
DC-Cumberland	21,800	19,060	22,530	21,420
NY-Miami	83,930	110,580	109,300	55,030
Chicago - Florida	15,630	19,780	18,080	9,350
Chicago - New Orleans	12,590	17,730	16,360	8,370
Chicago - Carbondale	15,920	17,770	16,870	16,370
Chicago - Detroit	42,400	42,600	40,890	30,290
Chicago - Port Huron	6,710	6,570	6,620	3,700
New Orleans - Los Angeles	10,250	13,560	12,390	6,910
Chicago - Los Angeles	31,210	36,450	34,720	20,310
Chicago - San Francisco	26,390	29,660	29,660	18,120
Chicago-Minot-Seattle (EB)	20,550	25,660	24,000	12,280
Chicago-Billings-Seattle (NCH)	11,410	15,800	16,490	6,930
Seattle - Los Angeles	38,270	44,310	48,110	29,810
Chicago - Houston	27,010	31,980	29,920	16,110
Chicago - St. Louis	24,390	27,130	26,320	17,260
Chicago - Laredo	5,510	7,770	7,470	2,650
Chicago - Milwaukee	27,630	28,890	29,560	21,650
Chicago - Minneapolis	10,720	13,820	14,070	7,350
Vancouver - Seattle	6,900	8,390	9,200	5,920
San Diego - Los Angeles	72,970	73,010	78,810	56,640
Oakland - Bakersfield	8,430	8,020	8,800	4,820
NY - L.A. thru car	600	530	--	--
Chicago - Dubuque	4,240	4,780	4,570	3,060
Minneapolis - Duluth	11,370	10,530	10,800	7,740
Chicago - Quincy	6,190	7,440	6,260	5,670
Seattle - Portland	18,550	21,710	22,600	15,410
Salt Lake City - Seattle	8,230	12,690	12,680	7,260
Special trains	690	--	--	--

System ridership totals: Jun 1,668,559; Jul 1,743,409; Aug 1,806,489; Sep 1,465,199. Passenger-miles: Jun 398,921,984; Jul 476,971,776; Aug 482,930,432; Sep 302,675,200.

These ridership figures, for June, July, August, and September were received from Amtrak this month. The last ridership data we published, for March and April, appeared in the First July issue. Amtrak has gone to a new system of tallying ridership data which makes them not comparable with the figures previously issues. Note that these data are by market routes, not for the train routes previously used. For example, ridership on the Chicago-Seattle trains is divided into three segments: local Chicago-Milwaukee ridership is included in the Chicago-Milwaukee market, and riders between Chicago and Minneapolis are recorded in a new Chicago-Minneapolis market category. Amtrak says the new data are more accurate than those before.

THE DAYLIGHT TRAIN ACROSS WASHINGTON STATE

by Glenn Lee

"Ocean in view, O the joy" wrote Lewis and Clark in their journals when they reached the Pacific Ocean on their cross-country expedition. Similar feelings have been common among passenger train supporters in Washington State since schedule changes have produced a true daylight passenger train between Seattle and Spokane.

The former true daylight runs died nearly unlamented; the Great Northern CASCADIAN on Aug 15, 1959; and the Northern Pacific Nos. 5-6, the PACIFIC DAY EXPRESS (as the handlettered sign had proclaimed in the Spokane NP depot) in Mar, 1960--both following loss of RPO mail car contracts.

A group of four hard-core passenger train believers gathered in the Spokane depot at 6:30am one chilly mid-October morning to take in what is indeed one of the best all-day spectacles in the Amtrak system at the present time--the beautiful ride west thru the Coulee country, along the Columbia River, into the Cascades, thru the Cascade Tunnel, and along the shores of Puget Sound on the ex-GN route. This trip on the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA was to have its good and bad points--in microcosm what Amtrak is today.

The consist of tri-weekly train 17 was engines 535 and 536; and cars 1111, 1008, 1570, dome 9479, 4893, dome 9485, dome 9361 "Ocean View", 8045, 2678 "Silver Ridge", and 2662 "Silver Prairie". Arrival at Spokane had been early, and departure was 7am on the nose.

Two in the group of "fans" were friends of many years from California and deeply concerned about the imminent retirement of dome cars. A third, from Oregon, expressed similar views. One of the California friends had asked for my "lecture", which includes geography, geology, railway line changes, relative river flow volumes and the like, and I warmed to this topic as the day passed.

Most of the trip was spent in the dome cars, and it was easy for others to listen in on our chatter. Many believed that our group was composed of railway workers.

Moments after departure we were crossing BN's new Latah Creek Trestle, opened in Dec 1972 after the merger, to link the former GN and SP&S lines west of Latah Creek to the NP line which passes thru downtown Spokane on an earth-fill viaduct. There are several miles of new track on the relocated ex-GN route immediately west of the trestle, and the line is in excellent condition.

In 1973 I had been a passenger in sleeping car "Silver Ridge", which was to the rear of the diner on this trip. In 1973, the car had bounced "all over the lot", but on our consist it was tracking as smoothly as any of the cars, all of which were holding the rails extremely well, I thought.

The train must climb from an elevation of about 1900 feet in Spokane to over 2400 feet west of there, and we lunged into the hill with very little apparent effort. Because the GN line is less curved than the ex-NP line across Washington, the big SDP 40F units were able to operate with a minimum of speed restrictions.

The passenger count was low (in the 80's in coach, about 20 in sleepers), but the diner was full at 7:30am, and we were asked to wait in the Great Dome car "Ocean View". This car seems to have survived the Amtrak Era very well, and was a great pleasure to travel in.

Soon the extremely courteous and competent steward escorted us to our table. Train talk was interrupted long enough to ascertain the steward's previous work experience, and our

hunches were confirmed--he had been an ex-NP steward and looked every inch his calling. He seemed totally at home and at ease in 8045, one of 6 Budd-built dining cars delivered to NP in 1958. The remarkable spirit which flowed from this combination led me to believe that earlier rumors I had heard were probably true--that many NP men had considered having NP monads tatooed in private places, and many probably had instructions in their wills ordering NP monads carved on their gravestones.

The morning meal was an excellent experience, and helped set the stage emotionally for a full day of beauty.

By the end of breakfast, we were leaving the scrub pine territory and entering the eastern fringes of the "Coulee country". In the period ending about 15,000 to 12,000 years ago, the continental ice sheet flowing south from Canada blocked the Spokane River to the north of the ex-GN line, and also the Columbia River at the site of the Grand Coulee Dam. This forced the rivers, swollen with ice-melt, over the rim, and southwest across the "basin" thru which the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA operates. Many of the irregular channels carved by the waters easily can be spotted from the train.

The most spectacular event of all came at the end of the Ice Age--the collapse of an ice dam 2000 feet high

on the ex-NP line near Hope, Idaho, where the Clark Fork River drains into Pend Oreille Lake, east of Sandpoint. The lake formed by this ice dam extended east almost to Garrison, Montana, and "beaches" remaining from the impoundment can easily be seen on the hillside south of the ex-NP Missoula depot. When the ice dam broke, a lake about one-half the volume of Lake Michigan drained away in two days, creating the most fearsome rush of water ever known to man's study. One must travel to the planet Mars to find evidence of a flood as catastrophic.

We were late leaving Ephrata, getting away at 9:59am, some 14 minutes down. Only a few minutes later, at 10:04am, we passed a long eastbound freight in the siding for us. West of Quincy, a former stop for the GN WESTERN STAR, the route begins a descent of about 1000 feet in elevation from the "basin" to the edge of the Columbia River. This is one of the most spectacular non-mountain points along the route. A few miles west of Quincy, near the old siding of Crater, for a few quick moments, one can look hundreds of feet straight down into the plunge pool of a former glacial waterfall, which was eroding to the east rapidly when the ice dams broke, allowing the rivers to return to their regular pre-glacial channels (the ones in use today). My friends gasped at the sight, and several other passengers in the dome also looked left to see the stunning sight, which includes a small remnant lake in the depression, forming the end of what today is known as a "corral coulee" (in which livestock can be kept without fences because of the steep coulee walls).

A few moments later we swung north and then northeast up another coulee descending to the famous Horseshoe Curve on which the train appeared extremely beautiful when fully stretched on the curvature. Others in the dome oohed, aahed, and other nodded, gasped and gurgled approval. In the distance to the west could be seen the Columbia River for the first time, now a long lake behind Wanapum Dam--but stark, raw and dramatically beautiful in its dry desert setting nonetheless.

Rolling west from the side canyon, we emerged above Crescent Bar and continued our descent to the water's edge. A few miles below Rock Island Dam, the animated passengers continued to be solidly glued to the passing scene outside. High above, on Colockum Ridge to the west of the river were stands of mountain-forest trees. Below, the willows and poplars were providing a dazzling show of fall color, which newspapers said was one of the best in many years.

At Rock Island Dam workers could be seen busy as ants constructing a new powerhouse on the west bank of the river. Rock Island, the first of many dams on the Columbia River, was built in 1921, and originally included a free-flow spillway, which had no control gates. As major upstream projects such as the Canadian storage dams, and the third powerhouse at Grand Coulee Dam have been built, it has become feasible to use all the water in the river at Rock Island. Thus more generators have been installed in the first powerhouse, adjacent to the tracks; the spillways have also received control gates; and a new powerhouse is being built.

Passengers looked directly into the fish ladder under the tracks at Rock Island for a brief moment before the train emerged along the shores of the reservoir above the dam.

This small lake provided a nice setting from which also to view apple orchards and distant mountains which were soon to loom close. Soon the train curved to the left, and passed over the Columbia River on the big bridge below Malaga. The single-span structure is actually two major spans. The first had been built in 1892 as the GN built west. In 1925, a second span was added, anchored on adjacent foundations, and linked to and inter-connected with the first span to provide much more strength for the large locomotives of the time. Railroaders are proud to note that traffic on the 85-year old structure has never been interrupted.

It's a few moments to catch the breath, and then we are stopped at the Wenatchee depot on time. At my encouragement, the others in my party left the train briefly to visit the public waiting room in the depot, which I consider very beautiful and very poignant--one of the finest remaining vestiges of the GN.

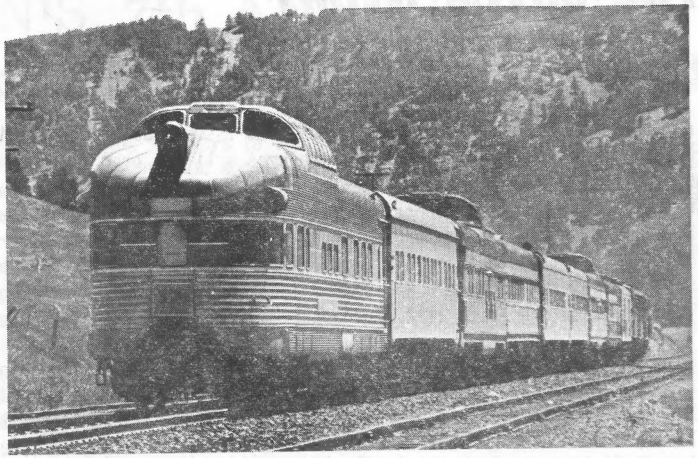
Departure from Wenatchee was on time, with a bigger crowd pushing into the dome cars for views of the Wenatchee River Valley--a colorful diarama as viewed from the train, with lush farms below, beautiful apple orchards on the hillsides, and all crowned by the high peaks of the Cascades in the distance. Each swing of the train along the curvature climbing to Cascade Tunnel seemed to bring new oohs and aahs from passengers who might otherwise have let the scenery pass had there been no dome car to put them above the roofline of the train.

Near Leavenworth, fall colors became a riotous spectacle, not to be outdone by colors anywhere along the line. The train moved rapidly over the Chumstick cutoff, opened in 1928 to avoid the Tumwater Canyon line, a usually unremarked side-program of the Cascade Tunnel project.

We reached the East Portal of the Cascade Tunnel at 12:22pm, and I persuaded the others that this was the time to break for lunch. We were to be in the tunnel 16 minutes, and I expected a delay at the West Portal, which materialized as I had thought. Luncheon was close at hand as we emerged into a cloudy Western Washington and proceeded into the Scenic siding for a 45-minute pause.

My California friends were extremely animated and continued to remark that they had not realized what excellent scenery lined the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA route. At 1:28pm the eastbound HIAWATHA passed, and I was able to jot down the consist on my paper tablecloth. The 45 minutes we had spent in Scenic siding was due to the fact that two former sidings on the 13 miles of 2.2% grade between Scenic and Skykomish have been removed; Alpine, which had been about 4 miles down; and Tonga, which had been about 8 miles down from the tunnel. The east- and westbound trains had been scheduled to reach opposite ends of the grade at the same time, and the dispatcher had elected to make our No. 17 late so that No. 18 might proceed upgrade on time.

Rain clouds gathered as we swept by the Foss Creek Trestle, where in 1943 electric locomotive 5011 jumped the tracks at nearly 100mph in a spectacular runaway. Others listened as I pointed out the site.



On June 22, 1972 the eastbound NORTH COAST HIAWATHA was carrying an ex-CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR dome observation car later moved to the TEXAS CHIEF (LONE STAR) consists and now running on the SUNSET LIMITED. In this photo by Gil Hulin, the train is nearing Livingston, Montana. Photo reprinted from RTN No. 40 (July 17, 1972).

West from Skykomish the track is good and we hurried along thru the valley lowlands under the tall peaks, the most outstanding of which is Mt. Index, high above the small community of the same name. The chatter diminished as we settled back to enjoy the hum of the train and the click of the rails from the dome, barreling thru the increasing rain. A hypnotic mood!

We departed Everett 2:57pm, some 17 minutes late for the run along Puget Sound to Seattle. The train seemed quieter now, as more people were relaxing after the scenery, and also because many had detrained at Everett. North of Edmonds I moved from right hand side of "Ocean View" to the left side to check on a former grade gradually being buried by slides. An older gentelman whom I took to be an Amtrak employee turned around and said to me: "We sure are going to miss these dome cars, aren't we?"

We arrived at Seattle's King Street Station at 3:55pm, some 10 minutes early despite the delays, thanks to the excessively padded schedule.

This was to be the end of the party. The two California friends were flying south, and the friend from Oregon was to return south on the MT. RAINIER. As we talked, a senior citizen approached me, standing in the waiting room, and said: "Young man, I want to thank you very much for the way in which you helped make this trip so wonderful an experience for me and my wife. This is our first trip to Washington and we could not have had a more pleasant trip today coming from Spokane." I was slightly embarrassed, and told him that I was glad that he could have come along, and hoped he would have a pleasant stay.

I did not mention it to my friends, but that short bit of conversation helped increase my confidence in saying that we are not far wrong when we tell others how much it is that we dearly love the Evergreen State of Washington, and how very pleasant it is to renew our acquaintance on the daylight train.

THE COVER STORY

On December 7, 1970, RTN published its first issue. Seven years later we look at a stack of 164 issues that measures a little over six inches high and weighs a little over six pounds--a very small package for the intense involvement on the part of all those connected with producing and reading it, and a chronicle of the unexpected, recording those strange events that mark our way back into the era of the rail renaissance. Seven years ago we didn't know what the course of rail travel events would be after "Railpax" began operating. Now we feel that we can predict a little more surely, but we know that many surprises still lie in wait.

When we look back thru the issues of the past seven years, we find repeated themes--indeed, history does repeat itself. For example, in our Second July 1973 issue (now out of print) we read: "On July 2 Amtrak posted notices that the Chicago-Florida FLORIDIAN was to be discontinued August 2, following Dept. of Transportation plans to prune back the Amtrak system to an even smaller skeleton." This quotation was from an article entitled "The case for the FLORIDIAN". In our First August 1977 issue we published an article entitled "The FLORIDIAN story" that was in essence a repeat and updating of the older story. History repeats itself. Each fiscal year the Washington accountants want to prune away the trains that don't look good on paper. And each fiscal year rail supporters are called upon to defend the most defenseless members of our rail passenger system.

But let's get back to talking about ourselves. When RTN was introduced, it was called "Rail Travel Newsletter". In January, 1975 the name was shortened to "Rail Travel News". Two years ago, when RTN celebrated its fifth anniversary, we published a special issue (First December 1975) of 28 pages--the largest we'd ever done, and considerably bigger than the 8-page issue number one. The issue you are reading is the second 28-page issue in our history, pressing closely on our one-ounce weight limit. In our Fifth Anniversary issue we talked at length about the production of RTN and many of the operations behind-the-scenes. We won't repeat that now, but urge new readers to check out that issue if you're curious about these matters.

RTN'S GRAPHIC QUALITY

Starting with the Second April 1975 issue we began doing our own printing, in order to cut expenses and survive and in order to be more flexible and fast with deadlines. For a long time our printing quality suffered. While owning our own printing facility allowed us to introduce color into our pages and make other innovations that we couldn't afford when our printing was farmed out, our press seemed to defy attempts to tame it. You'll probably agree that at last, with recent issues, we've got the beast tamed and we can afford to get bolder in using trickier printing techniques and applying bigger splotches of ink to the page. This has been mostly the result of finding the best brand of ink and of making some modifications in our press to improve its performance.

RTN'S 7th ANNIVERSARY

We're always looking for ways to improve RTN, and at times like this we look back thru the older issues and sometimes feel that RTN was on some occasions more attractive than it is now. If we were forced to choose our one favorite issue, we would pick the April 3, 1972 issue, especially for the interesting graphics of the "POTOMAC TURBO" article (remember the POTOMAC TURBO?) and the old engraving on the cover of the steam train broken down, along with the caption "What do you mean, Mr. Haswell, that the railroad offered Amtrak only the oldest, rundown, most pollutant engines?" The years 1972 and 1973 were vintage RTN years, in our personal opinion--full of spontaneity and excitement and rough edges unsanded by professionalism. In recent years we've moved toward greater "responsibility" in reporting, with more thorough checking out of stories and careful labelling of rumor, fact and opinion.

We still continually receive high praise from readers, and it still keeps us motivated to chug on. For example, a reader has just written: "How do you guys do it? I work for Amtrak, and frequently read news in RTN before I see it in the ARTS computer. Your publication is excellent!"

We listen carefully to all reader suggestions about the format and content of RTN. Our most popular department, the Mixed Train of Thoughts, first appeared August 2, 1971, and was suggested to us by our friend and now NARP Director Robert Glover. The only department we receive complaints about is "Cars & Consists". It's clear that some people are "consist freaks" and others aren't. It is also clear, however, that there are enough consist enthusiasts among our readers to ensure the continuation of the department. (We don't read every section of the newspaper either, but recognize that other people do.)

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS: There are two top priorities we're aiming at. One is to increase our staff of regular reporters in order to strengthen our nationwide coverage. The other is to continue to improve the graphic quality of RTN. The better operation of our press inspires us to become more graphically experimental, and to capture more of the vintage quality of some earlier RTNs, as well as add some graphic techniques that ownership of our own print shop permits.

(continued on page 23)

The "Captain Amtrack" comic strip appeared in RTN starting in issue no. 13 until it was dropped after issue 21. The strip, which was drawn by artist Mike Cohen, was one of the most popular early features of RTN. However, it was deemed that RTN could not spare the space for a comic strip with all the news coverage that was necessary.

A TRANS-EUROPE-EXPRESS COMES TO NORTHERN ONTARIO

by Duane W. Roller

Once it was the EDELWEISS, running between Switzerland and Holland. Last June 9 the same trainsets began service as the NORTHLANDER, between Toronto and Timmins. Canadian Thanksgiving weekend gave me the opportunity to try this service, as I rode train 121 from Toronto to Timmins on Oct 8 and train 122 southbound the next day.

Despite the age of the equipment--it is as old as much of Amtrak's conventional equipment inherited from the Santa Fe--the train gave forth an atmosphere of solid rather than showy newness, and a roominess lacking in Amfleet. The huge picture windows (about 3 by 4 feet, twice Amfleet size), broad aisles, and large vestibules provide a true spaciousness.

Seat reservations (held in the CN computer) are necessary, and passengers may request either a seat in the compartment car (9 compartments of 6 facing seats) or in the open coach where seats face each other in sets of two or four. The third car is half a 32-seat diner and half a lounge area. Computer assignments are by car only, and actual seat designation is made by a hostess at Toronto, North Bay, and Timmins, and by the conductor elsewhere. The compartment car is popular because for many people it is their first experience with this European style seen in so many movies.

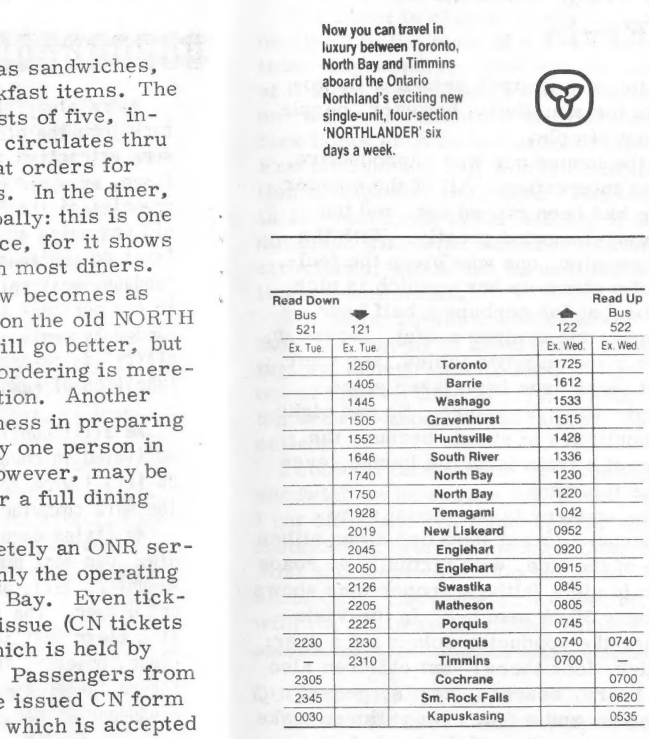
The NORTHLANDER is probably the only completely personalized train operating in North America today. Menus, china, placemats, even tickets and hat checks, all bear the NORTHLANDER symbol, a slanting "N" which is one of the three Z-shaped slashes that is the symbol of the ONR turned ninety degress.

The dining car menu features northern specialities such as pickerel, at prices somewhat less than those of CN or CPR. Four dinners are offered at prices ranging from $5 to $6.75; there are three hot lunch plates and three salads, as well as sandwiches, and the standard breakfast items. The dining car crew consists of five, including a hostess who circulates thru the train taking at-seat orders for drinks and sandwiches. In the diner, orders are taken verbally: this is one weakness of the service, for it shows why this is not done in most diners. Perhaps when the crew becomes as experienced as those on the old NORTH COAST LIMITED it will go better, but at present the verbal ordering is merely a source of congestion. Another weakness is the slowness in preparing food, for there is only one person in the kitchen. This, however, may be a reasonable price for a full dining operation.

The train is completely an ONR service. CN provides only the operating crews south of North Bay. Even tickets are special ONR issue (CN tickets are not accepted), which is held by CN on-line stations. Passengers from other CN stations are issued CN form 81, a prepaid order, which is accepted on the train without exchange.

Practically all passengers are traveling to or from Toronto. On my northward trip, we left Toronto with 98 passengers, and arrived at Timmins with 8; southbound, passenger count rose from 15 to 34. Most passengers seemed to be converts from the vastly inferior bus service or the vastly more expensive air service, but the advent of the Canadian winter may bring passengers from their cars. The train has captured popular imagination: despite four months of operation, people still turn out at stations and along the right of way to watch it pass.

There has been some confusion about the routing of the train. The original plan was to have the trains reverse in Toronto. But CN insisted on engine-forward operation: thus the initial service came thru Toronto in a clockwise fashion, from Washago to Toronto via the Bala Subdivision (thru Beaverton), and from Toronto to Washago via the



Newmarket Subdivision (thru Barrie). When, however, a stop was recently instituted at Barrie for train 121 (at 2:12pm) and 122 (at 4:17pm), the operation of trains 122-123 was reversed to counter-clockwise so that at present each subdivision has one train in each direction. In addition, arrival time at Toronto for train 122 was changed from 5:30pm to 5:50 because of the longer running time on the Newmarket Subdivision.

Early press reports indicated that the train would reverse at North Bay, eliminating the backup movement familiar to patrons of the nighttime service. This was not only untrue, but also an impossibility due to the nature of the connection between CN and ONR at the John St. Crossover, and the backup move remains.

ONR is clearly proud of its service and is doing everything to make it succeed. There are problems, however. The deficit is high and patronage is lower than expected. Daily service was to have begun Oct 1, but this has been postponed. And there will be casualties in the form of other trains. Already all other service on the Timmins branch has been discontinued, and thus the thru Toronto-Timmins car overnight. Passengers must now change to a bus at Porquis Junction if they wish to travel overnight. And the CN local services south of North Bay are suffering: recently CN 96 arrived Toronto with no revenue passengers. The original plan was to institute the new day service as a replacement for the overnight train, and use buses for branch service. But the CTC's ruling that the night train must stay, while a victory in one sense, may dilute the market before it has a chance to build, altho the existence of two daily trains between Toronto and northern Ontario, something not available since the 1950's, may make it easier to take the train.

There are also problems with CN. As with the MONTREALER, CN is reluctant to handle services which are not its own, and ONR is known to be dissatisfied with CN's handling of the train. ONR gives it top priority; CN gives it bottom. During the northbound trip we were sidetracked four times for freight trains between Toronto and North Bay, and train 122 is often delayed by 15 minutes by CN 169, the Barrie commuter train, resulting in late Toronto arrivals. The ONR's portion of the schedule is tight and the train runs at 75mph where possible. But CN's portion is loose and about 45 minutes could be removed if the train were given priority.

The best thing about the NORTHLANDER is that it is a train, not a converted airplane. The full dining service, picture windows, and general spaciousness are all among the most positive aspects, and a contrast to the claustrophobic Amfleet. The NORTHLANDER is exactly the type of equipment Amtrak needs for its longer daytime services.

NORTH TO THE BIG LAKE
by Andrew Ervin

Travel is good. To travel is to live; it is the growth of the soul, without which a person does not live but survives the week. There are various popular means by which a person may reach an end, but they are perverted: flying is a sleeping pill, an escape from life into nothingness; a bus can only take you from one B-movie existence to another, along simulation boulevard; a car is hopeless. To ride the rail is the height of living. It is sweet, bitter, warm, cool, exhausting, relaxing, joy, pain; collectively, growth in its purest form: it is moving for the sake of movement.

This country has a superb train and a number of above-average trains--and then we also have those trains which promise little other than rail-bound vehicular movement. The Minneapolis thru the woods to Duluth ARROWHEAD is one of the latter, but that was quite enough for me to climb aboard on a Sunday morning in late August.

I suppose it left on time--I was more interested in feeling the slight tug, then watching the F-9 pair, combine, coaches and lounge car move out of the old GN depot and S-curve onto the former NP junction line leading to the main. I should have been in the dome for this, but there were only 24 seats, and I had been the 25th passenger in line at the escalator ...but okay, as conventional coaches have big windows next to them.

For a state-subsidized run the load was enormous (about 150), and the train long (ten cars). But for any run the meal service was minute: for all real purposes, it did not exist. Morning food was coffee and donuts, which is not a meal, but rather a gut pacifier. I was greatly disappointed, more so by the fact that the situation did not arise out of necessity. The food service car was an ex-lunch counter lounge (probably of Santa Fe ancestry, but possibly GN) with kitchen facilities intact. Amtrak seems to be going in for simplicity; however, people are not simple.

If the lounge car was unproductive, it was interesting. All of the counter seats had been ripped out, and the counter elongated greatly. With the long counter, one was given the feeling of a stand-up bar --which is nice to stand at for perhaps a half hour, but soon one desires a seat. However, there were only two tables, and their eight seats have been taken since shortly after departure. So one sighs but continues to stand, because the heart of a train is in the lounge, even in the morning.

The scenery is gorgeous: semi-wilderness forest land lies along either side of the line, with virtually no roads ever in sight (altho a proper map shows highway 35-W nearby). In the Vista-dome, the conductor points out a deer: "Quick, look there!" but children also see bears, beavers, hawks, geese, raccoons and a fox. The children make up a good portion of the load, being taken by parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends' parents for a train ride and perhaps a boat trip on the Big Lake. And the children are excited, for they see things they had no idea existed and they do so with older people. The older people tend not to be able to see quite as much as the younger ones, but while they observe the children having a fine time the train moves along at 70, 75 and even 79 miles per hour, so they too enjoy the ride.

The ARROWHEAD ends its run grandly, crawling across the Saint Louis River on the trestle, with the Big Lake on the right, mammoth ore docks on the left, and Duluth forward, set into the hills, appearing as if a scaled-down Midwestern version of San Francisco.

The old Union Depot is now a museum, using the train shed to house railroad cars, steam and diesel engines and other artifacts. Thusly, a run-by track is used for unloading, and a corner of the building's lower level for a waiting room. It suffices.

The Depot is classic North Country, designed in the style of a French Chateau--supposedly. After having looked at it from several angles and distances, one becomes convinced that the structure is not even an imitation of the French Chateau, but rather an imitation of a Quebec imitation. The Depot is 103 years old; nevertheless, it does not clash with other downtown Duluth structures, which are as well imitations of imitations.

The same 10-car consist backed down the run-by at about 5:15, allowing just enough time to load and get out of town on time at 5:35. Again, a big crowd--about 180 on board. Excellent.

I couldn't face a cold, pre-packaged sandwich as an excuse for dinner, so I put off dinner till Minneapolis, and instead just drank. I wanted Canadian Mist and ginger ale. No could do. How about CC? Let's see... I ended up with the Minneapolis dining service department's choice, Jim Beam. While we rolled southward under a fading sun, I sipped three drinks; an amount of alcohol that I readily admit is not terribly good for an empty stomach; however, it is better--and far more palatable--than what other folks were consuming. Cupcakes were extremely popular, as were Cokes. The children tore up on Chuckles and Mounds, and everyone chowed away on Ding Dongs, Crackerjacks, things that looked like bananas and big bags of potato chips. One man stepped up to the bar and quite specifically ordered a Smirnoff Silver and soda. After a Gordons vodka was served, he said, formally, "And, oh, I'll have a Ho-Ho."

A half-mile from the Minneapolis station we took siding; a minute later the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA rolled by in the darkness, its brightly lighted diner populated by late diners, leisurely enjoying baked potatoes, halibut and apple pie à la mode. I was happy for them.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"I can't think of a single recent action in the field of travel more ill-timed or shocking than the cutback in Amtrak's rail passenger routes and services. If these reductions, and the federal policy behind them, are allowed to stand, we might as well close down Amtrak now and prepare for the serious environmental losses inevitable in living without it."

--Michael Frome in Los Angeles Times, Oct 30.

"Since it takes only a fourth as much thrust to move a railway car on steel rails as it does to move a rubber-tired vehicle on concrete, a modern train requires only about fifteen relatively pollution-free horsepower per passenger to perhaps ten times that for a pollution-belching auto."

--Tom Wicker in NY Times, Dec 1, 1970 (reprinted from RTN No. 1).

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Despite the decline of rail travel in the United States, elegance has not disappeared. The Twentieth Century Limited still runs from Chicago to New York and one still can order lobster souffle for dinner and strawberries for breakfast."

--Gus Stevens in San Francisco Examiner/Chronicle, Nov 6.

(Has the 20th Century Railroad Club heard about this?)

"The first direct train link between Amtrak and San Francisco's BART, 'The Sacramentan,' began service in late October. The state-supported 'Sacramentan' operates daily between Oakland and San Francisco for a two-hour trip each way."

--Mass Transit magazine, November.

(It's slow because of the crew change at Yerba Buena Island.)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED running eastbound at 79 miles an hour on Nov 19 struck an abandoned pickup truck on the tracks near Delhi, Colorado and derailed, injuring about 18 passengers, one reportedly seriously. Four engines and six cars left the track. The train was carrying 179 persons. Consist of the wrecked train was engines 503, 529, 522, 555; cars 9930 deadhead hi-level coach, 9221 deadhead dome slpr buffet, baggage 1027, 9991, 9906, 9934, 9971, 9933, 8071, 2200 "Silver Dove", 2760 "Palm Top", 2654 "Silver Falls", 2213 "Indian Flute", baggage 1021. The most heavily damaged cars were 9221, 1027 and 9991. The wreck occurred at 7:45pm MST. Passengers were bused on in two local buses, a Continental Trailways bus from Garden City and a Greyhound from La Junta. On Nov 21 the makeup train of substitute equipment leaving Chicago consisted of engines 501 & 508; and cars 1181, 1045, 2367 "Regal River" used as dorm, 9909, 9936, 9974 (lights failed outside Chicago), 9908, 8096 (lights failed after Streator), 2220 "Indian Squaw", 2712 "Pine Brook", and dome slpr buffet 9220 (lights failed but repaired outside Chicago), and 2365 "Regal Hill"..... THE GOOD NEWS that Congress has come to the rescue of Amtrak again (see p. 5) has relieved many people at L'Enfant Plaza who have been feeling that things have been going downhill for some months now. We felt that way too. We think it's important to consider now that the involvement of rail consumers still needs to be strongly stimulated. Because Amtrak is taking down the notices on the trains that were scheduled for potential discontinuance, doesn't mean that the routes are safe by any means. With Amtrak and the DOT jointly plotting out a zero-base system by March 1, it's necessary that rail supporters provide their input now to help and to influence Amtrak in this decision-making. Congress will evaluate the system that Amtrak and the DOT come up with, and according to the Washington Post, will make a "comprehensive, long-range policy decision based on it." This is a most important turning point in Amtrak's history--at least as important as the laying out of the skeletal system back in 1970 and 1971. One way of influencing the coming decisions is joining with other rail-supporting groups. We will publish our promised list of local Rail Passenger Associations next issue for the benefit of those who want to help...

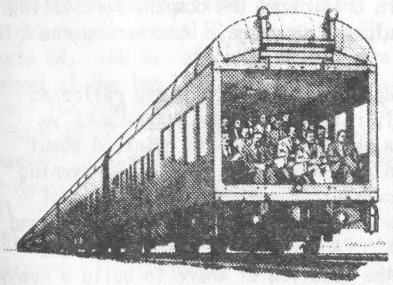
* * *

PRESIDENT CARTER'S NOMINEES for the Amtrak Board of Directors have been held up because one of the names Carter submitted has been challenged by the Senate. Frank Neel was found to have been a county campaign chairman for Carter in Georgia and to have served on the Georgia State Democratic Executive Committee, altho he called himself an independent. In addition, Neel, who is head of Neel Air conditioning and Heating Co. of Thomasville, Georgia, was found not to have ridden an American train since 1964. Neel was nominated as a consumer representative on the Amtrak Board..... TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS has been criticized in the press for showing more interest in running for the Senate later than in being a cabinet member. The San Francisco Examiner now has reported that Adams has set up a trust fund of $50,800 to finance his office seeking once he leaves the cabinet. The money reportedly was left over from campaign contributions to his Congressional campaign in Washington State..... AS WE LOOKED thru old files of RTN material in preparing this anniversary issue, we ran across the March 1973 NARP newsletter, which listed Congressman John J. McFall of Manteca CA as one of the "Friends of the Railroad Passenger". My, how people change! As chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation McFall is a powerful man. He controls the pursestrings of the DOT, the ICC and other transportation agencies. He was responsible for the cutback in Amtrak's budget and the granting of only $8 million of Amtrak's supplemental appropriations request until the House openly revolted against his subcommittee and voted $18 million. The Sacramento Bee this month reported his campaign contributions--he is already preparing to

(page 20)

run for re-election next year. Among his contributors were a number of transportation interests. The UTU of Cleveland was the biggest, reported the Bee. Represented were several railroads: SP, BN, UP, and ICG, according to the Bee. Maybe Amtrak would fare better if his campaign ends in defeat next year.....

AMTRAK SOLICITED PUBLIC comment on the five trains it sought to discontinue, before that was rescinded by the latest act of Congress. Let's look at what Amtrak said about the five, however, since undoubtedly they will get top billing for removal when the DOT and Amtrak plan out their "zero-base" system: The options that Amtrak offered the public had the five trains divided into groups, with the two Seattle-Chicago trains in one group, the two Chicago-Texas trains in another, and the SAN JOAQUIN as a third category. Amtrak gave 3 options for the Seattle-Chicago trains: (1) daily Chicago-Seattle service via Minneapolis and St. Cloud, Bismarck, Billings, Spokane and Pasco; thus this proposed train would follow the present EMPIRE BUILDER route from Seattle to Spokane and then the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA route Spokane-Chicago. Twice-daily service would continue Chicago-Minneapolis. (2) Same as option 1, with addition of thru cars Chicago-Portland via Pasco and Wishram WA. (3) Discontinue all service. Chicago-Texas options: (1) continue existing service. (2) Discontinue INTER-AMERICAN St. Louis-Laredo. (3) Discontinue service between St. Louis and Laredo but extend LONE STAR to San Antonio daily. (4) Discontinue service between St. Louis and Laredo but extend LONE STAR to Laredo. The SAN JOAQUIN options: (1) Extend service between Bakersfield and Los Angeles. (2) Discontinue service. Amtrak wanted its public comment by Jan 21. Amtrak listed the estimated deficits for each route for fiscal 1978 as follows: EMPIRE BUILDER $11 million; NORTH COAST HIAWATHA $7.3 million; LONE STAR $6.4 million; INTER-AMERICAN $3 million; SAN JOAQUIN $1.4 million..... CURRENT SOUTHERN RAILWAY newspaper ads picture the "unique track inspection car" shown here and state that SR will have its president and his top officers "personally inspect all of our mainline track mileage" this year from the vantage point of this special car..... AND SOUTHERN RAILWAY has begun talks with Amtrak on the possibility of handing over the SOUTHERN CRESCENT to the nationwide rail corporation. One of the matters still to be settled is what the buy-in cost would be; SR would have to pay Amtrak some amount to have it take over the train, as the other railroads paid fees to Amtrak beginning in 1971, the fees amounting to half their passenger train deficits of the previous year. The CRESCENT is expected to show a $7 million deficit this year. The Washington Star (Nov 18) said that SOUTHERN CRESCENT ridership was 217,852 in 1976, 234,321 in 1975, and 284,721 in the energy-crisis year of 1974.....



COSTLY CREW CHANGES on the SAN JOAQUIN have been criticized by Amtrak Board nominee Sen. James Mills, who said that $300,000 per year could be saved by not having the railroad crew change when the train is just 40 miles out of Oakland (when it goes from SP to Santa Fe rail and vice versa). That amounts to over 21% of the total train deficit on the Oakland-Bakersfield line. The state of California is known to be upset about Amtrak's failure thus far to take action on such costly crew problems, and may take the initiative itself.....

WHY DOESN'T AMTRAK act more aggressively in dealing with the railroads? One seasoned observer presents this theory: the "revolving-door" climate at Amtrak means that highly-placed personnel must look to the railroads for employment if they leave the rail corporation, so they are careful not to offend them, who might have to give them work later..... A MAJOR ARTICLE describing Amtrak operations from a traveler's viewpoint appears in U.S. News & World Report (Nov 28 issue). The report of a 7-day trip is written by Associate Editor Fred W.

Frailey (author of "Zephyrs, Chiefs and Other Orphans"), whom we consider one of America's best train writers. His report on Amtrak trains (plus the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR) is highly favorable (quote: "Watching Wisconsin drift by my window this afternoon, it dawns on me that in six days of almost continuous rail travel, I have yet to find my first unhappy Amtrak customer, my first unfriendly Amtrak employee, or my first late train. I haven't even located a dirty window. Has Amtrak, after 6½ years, finally gotten its game together?"). The article will make readers want to jump up and go train riding. He concludes with a page on Amtrak's current financial problems that's very well-balanced (written before the recent $18 million appropriation was approved). There's even a photo of the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR's fabled chef..... AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION chairman Eugene Kerik Garfield faced a group of unhappy stockholders at their annual meeting this month. They were wondering why the company lost over $300,000 in the first three months of this fiscal year, after a loss of $367,000 last year. A few days before, Auto-Train had announced an economy move involving laying off 120 employees and Garfield's chauffeur and other cuts. The company says that losses last year were due to two derailments and to suspension of the Louisville-Florida service. In what was described in the press as a "confrontation", stockholders criticized Garfield as running a "personal playground for the executive staff". They complained that the company's stock has been dropping in value steadily for five years. Garfield noted some developments that will increase Auto-Train's business: the Mexican government has at last agreed to allow Auto-Train service in that country starting next year; and the Washington AAA will help promote Auto-Train among its members. Auto-Train plans to sell some equipment to the Mexican operation, a venture on which Auto-Train will earn a 10% commission on U.S.-sold tickets plus a share of profits. But stockholders criticized the company for selling cars when it had complained earlier of an equipment shortage. Observers agree that Garfield is in hot water..... * * *

CBS RADIO PRESENTED a short "philosophic debate" on Amtrak and the railroads on Nov 14. It didn't say very much but simply raised the issue of how much we ought to subsidize Amtrak. Quote: "we have a philosophic debate going on about railroads, composed--admittedly--of more than just nostalgia for the old evening train. What is marginal today may, under tomorrow's conditions, become useful again. It's all a part of the greater debate about the American way of life, and its possible future variations"..... AMTRAK'S PAUL REISTRUP, Brock Adams and Conrail's Edward Jordan met on Nov 15 about the question of where to build a heavy maintenance facility for the Northeast Corridor. The general conclusion was that none at all would be built for a while, at least until Amtrak decides what kind of equipment will be maintained there. The suggestion seemed to be Reistrup's, and Adams apparently goes along with it. There has been a heated debate over the location of such a facility, whether it's to be in Boston or Wilmington.....

NEW BURLINGTON BRIDGE has been built and opened this month in La Grange, IL to replace the one destroyed in the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR wreck of Aug 27.....

THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY voted by a 5-1 margin this month to eliminate industry-wide work rules requiring rail equipment owners to install and maintain automatic car identification (ACI) labels on freight and passenger cars. The little color-coded striped labels have been a familiar to sight to people riding the rails for the past ten years, but have been found to be generally a failure. One of the problems reportedly was keeping them clean..... THE MINNESOTA ASSOCATION of RR Passengers will meet on Dec 15 at 8pm at the Twin City Federal Bldg, 6th & Robert, in St. Paul. The association calls the meeting extremely important.....

THE ICC HAS denied Amtrak's petition to drop sleeping car service on the INTER-AMERICAN..... FIVE AMTRAK STOPS have been made permanent, Amtrak announced Nov 22: Aberdeen MD, Benson AZ; Dillon and Kingstree SC; and Palatka FL.....

CASEY JONES'S SON, Charles B. Jones, died this month and was buried Nov 15 at

Jackson, Tenn. The younger Jones was 12 years old when his father was killed in the Illinois Central wreck made legendary in song and story. The son worked for the railroad too, retiring after 50 years of service in 1960 from the IC.....

AMTRAK HAS LOST its N.E. Corridor director, Charles E. Bertrand, to the D&H, as noted here last issue. Albert M. Schofield took his place Nov 15. He's responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Corridor. He joined Amtrak in 1976 at the time of the Conrail startup. On Nov 2 Amtrak announced that Robert A. Herman has been named VP and general manager of national operations. He held the job on an interim basis for several previous months. He has overall responsibility for transportation, running maintenance, on-board service, commissaries, stations and liaison with the railroads for the whole system except the Corridor. The three regional VPs report to him. He came to Amtrak in 1975 from the PC.....

SEN. JOHN MCCLELLAN of Arkansas died on Nov 28, leaving his position as chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee open to Sen. Warren Magnuson of Washington State. Shortly before his death he had planned to retire. Magnuson will relinquish chairmanship of the Commerce Committee to take the new post.....

A CONRAIL WRECK in the early hours of Nov 19 between Lewisburg and Huntingdon caused an unusual detouring of the eastbound BROADWAY and NATIONAL that day--Altoona-Lock Haven-Williamsport-Sunbury-Harrisburg--mostly over the route of the pre-Amtrak Harrisburg-Buffalo service. The BROADWAY and NATIONAL arrived Harrisburg 5 and 4 hours late respectively..... NEW AMTRAK MENUS have just been distributed systemwide. Amtrak says they give a "new emphasis to multi-course, fixed-price dinner selections." All the table d'hote dinners offer choice of fish, meat (usually beef) or chicken as an entree, with a plate of hors d'oeuvres, tossed green salad, dessert (apple pie, ice cream or twin custard puffs), drink (coffee, tea, Sanka, milk); and the entree comes with potato, vegetables, rolls & butter...

DAY-BEFORE-THANKSGIVING derailment: The two COAST STARLIGHTS were blocked by a freight derailment on SP late on Nov 23, closing the line between Dunsmuir and Mt. Shasta CA. The two affected trains were carrying a total of about 800, and they stopped at the two locations mentioned above while passengers were bused between them. The southbd train was about 7 hrs late, and the northbd about 4 hrs late...

PLEASURE DOME LOUNGES were taken off the SOUTHWEST LIMITED a while back, as you remember. Now they are being used on the COAST STARLIGHT. Cars 9352 & 9354 so far have supplemented ex-SP domes 9371, 9372, and 9374 on the train. SP found that the Santa Fe cars would meet clearances on the L.A.-Seattle line.....

WINTER (continued from page 8)

blizzard. The westbound PIONEER due Seattle Nov 27 evening arrived 1:30am the next morning, stuck behind a UP freight derailment. Heavy rains caused flooding rivers in Western Washington State Dec 2, blocking the Seattle-Portland Amtrak line and major highways.

News in this issue is updated thru Dec 3 a.m.

RTN'S SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY (continued from page 15)

With this issue for the first time we have solicited ads from potential advertisers. We are experimenting with this procedure to see whether the amount of advertising we obtain can offset the cost of adding extra pages to an issue (we can't sacrifice news space in a publication like this). Advertisers tell us that their ads get a remarkable response. That's because RTN is small, and ads get high visibility in it, whereas they get lost in bigger magazines. Readers typically tell us they read RTN "from cover to cover". Thus the ads get read too.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your enthusiastic support of RTN. And we are happy to have some good news to report in this issue. Our anniversary seems to come at a turning point in U.S. rail passenger history. Congress has re-asserted its interest in the Amtrak system, and the time is ripe for increased involvement on the part of rail supporters. We will continue to be here at RTN to do what we can to foster the rail renaissance in America.

EXPRESS ADS

ONE QUICK CALL DOES IT ALL--Amtrak or airline reservations and tickets, hotels, car rentals, tours, cruises! Call GREAT WESTERN TOURS at (415) 398-2994, or write us at 639 Market Street, Ninth Floor, San Francisco 94105.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

Employee Timetables, Pullman Diagrams, Railroadiana. Send SSAE. 20th Century Hobbies Ltd., 1034 College Avenue, Wheaton IL 60187.

GOING EURAIL? Take a worldwide THOMAS COOK INTERNATIONAL TIMETABLE, $7.50 bulk mail ($9.50 air) from Thomas Cook Ltd, P.O. Box 36, Peterborough, England.

TIMETABLES - "What it was before it was AMTRAK". Last pre-Amtrak Public Timetables of - D&H; PC East West; C&O/B&O; N&W; RF&P; SOU; SCL; L&N; GTW; IC; GM&O; CRI&P; BN; CNW; MILW; MP; AT&SF; D&RGW; UP; SP - - $1.50 each; 10 for $12.50; all 20 for $21.00. Add 10¢ per item postage.
CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland Street, Hamden CT 06518.

NORTHWEST RAIL IMAGES announces three new duplicate slide sets: Amtrak West, Amtrak East, and Trains of Northern Mexico. Each contains 25 views for $6.00. New customers may prefer to send 35¢ for a sample slide and complete list of more than 20 sets now available, including our popular "Before Amtrak" series. Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, Oregon 97405.

"Atlanta - Richland (Plains) - Tallahassee - Jax?" --R. J. Swan, on FLORIDIAN.

I like MTDB's idea, and I like my LIGHT RAIL design for SAN DIEGO. Nobody's LIGHT RAIL is like my LIGHT RAIL. Will MTDB pay? If they want the best, can they afford not to?--R. J. Swan, transit catalyst, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801

RAILROADIANA EXTRAVAGANZA SALE! China, silver, hardware, furniture, paper, linens, glassware, books, art, etc. Send SASE to: Collector, Box 65, Miami FL 33164

Traveler's Trots? Portable water distiller with nylon carrying case. Many other home & commercial uses. Mr. Moist, Box 434A, Royal Oak, Mich. 48068.

Business Car No. 101 "Prospector." This classic and elegantly furnished ex-DRGW standard gauge business car now for sale. Car interior is wood paneled throughout and includes 3 staterooms, 2 showers, dining, lounge, and kitchen areas. Mechanically and structurally sound. Available for inspection in Los Angeles. T.C. Pearson, 7046 Leewood Forest Dr, Springfield VA 703-750-2369.

SALE: AMTRAK 10/30/77 TTs with NEC service cuts. Set of 6 (4 NY-DC, 1 NY-Bos, 1 Ph-Hbg) $5 or $1 ea. + 13¢ long SSAE. W. Stringer, 132 Edgewood,Ardmore PA 19003

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads (camera-ready) $25 per half-page (4x5 inches); smaller sizes are priced proportionately. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

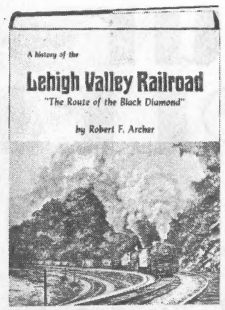
RAIL FANTRIPS

Feb 17-20, 1978. SOUTHERN CRESCENT NY-Atlanta. Sat. tours, overnight in slpr Sat. in Atlanta, Georgia Mixed train Sun. $225 incl. all rail & slpr accommodations. Tri-State NRHS, c/o Tom Nemeth, 210 Perrine Ave, Piscataway NJ 08854.

Feb 18-19: "Shasta Daylight" special Oakland-Eugene RT. Connections from L.A. by private cars on COAST STARLIGHT. $198 up. Brochure & reservations from Pacific Railroad Society, Box 70, East Irvine CA 92650.

Jan 14-15: "Snowflake Special 78" Boston-White River Jct via B&M, with D&H PA loco. Incl. lodging, meals, auction, etc. Info: Mystic Valley Rwy Society, Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. (617) 361-4445.

Howell-North Books



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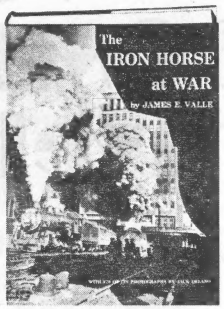

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LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD, "The Route of the Black Diamond" by Robert F. Archer

372 pages crammed with wonderful illustrations (about 700), Maps, Index, Bibliography. Here the 125-year history of a major coal road that had a stable of over 1,000 locomotives, a Great Lakes steamship line and a fleet of express passenger trains, which included the famed *Black Diamond*. Its rails traversed New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey to reach from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. Included as bonus is an Album of pictures from the top photographers of the line.

THE IRON HORSE AT WAR by James Valle

This is among the best collections of railroad photographs the publishers have ever seen. During WWII the US Office of War Information sent Jack Delano on a train trip from Chicago to the West Coast to photograph the railroads under war conditions. The resulting pictures were spectacular because the prime power was steam and the time was winter. Even the few Diesels shown were primitive and now long out of service – a part of history themselves. He took 272 of the book's 300 pictures. 260 pages, maps, Index.

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